



NEWS RELEASE

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A TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS: SBA SPOTLIGHTS THE BEST DURING SMALL BUSINESS WEEK 2000

New Forums Explore eCommerce, Youth Entrepreneurship and International Trade

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor America's top entrepreneurs and name the *National Small Business Person of the Year* during ceremonies in Washington, D.C. on **May 23-25**, marking **National Small Business Week 2000** on May 21-27. The celebration in the nation's capital is the culmination of events occurring across the country in honor of local winners and in anticipation of the announcement of the national winner.

The theme for this year's celebration, "**A History of Success, A Millennium of Opportunity**," honors entrepreneurs who have helped create the strongest economy in U.S. history.

National Small Business Week 2000 introduces a series of "issues forums," a new element added to the program of prior years. The *Millennium of Success Forums* will explore current trends driving the small business economy and the new challenges small businesses face today with eCommerce and an increasingly global economy. The forums will be held on Wednesday, May 24th in the morning and afternoon at the International Trade Center.

The panel *eSmall Business Challenges & Opportunities* (10:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.) will explore the ways that small businesses can take advantage of the opportunities possible with eCommerce. Prominent business leaders in the new digital economy will share their experiences on how to succeed in eCommerce with a nationwide small business audience.

A panel focusing on youth entrepreneurs will discuss how entrepreneurship can be a viable career option for students entering the job market. *Investing in Our Youth* (2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.) will also explore ways of including more information about starting and owning a small business in school-to-career curricula as a means of making a significant contribution to students' life opportunities, especially for displaced and at-risk youth.

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The session *Growing Your Small Business in a Global Economy* (3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) will showcase the resources available to small businesses to help them compete in international trade and discuss how small businesses can move into the global economy.

All the sessions will be Webcast at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov/webcast> and be available for viewing via satellite broadcast at the following coordinates:

Ku-Band	Telstar 6, Transponder 13, Downlink Frequency 11958 Vertical
C-Band	Galaxy 3, Transponder 2, Downlink Frequency 3740 Vertical

The SBA's Small Business Week celebration on May 23-25 will begin in the **International Trade Center, Ronald Reagan Building, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.** with exhibits showcasing the winners' businesses. This year marks the first time the exhibits will be open to the public. The events will continue at the **Renaissance Hotel, 999 Ninth Street, N.W.**

The *National Small Business Person of the Year* is selected from 53 state Small Business Persons of the Year – one from each state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Two runners up are also selected.

Small Business Advocates are also honored. These awards recognize individuals who have been advocates of minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses.

In addition, awards go to a small business journalist, accounting and financial services representatives who contribute to small business development.

In the special awards category, the *Phoenix Awards* recognize a public official, a business owner and a volunteer whose efforts and contributions enabled their business or community to recover following a disaster. The SBA gives this award as part of its role as the nation's banker in times of disaster for homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes. This year, SBA is also recognizing an insurance company whose exceptional efforts and contributions enabled businesses, homeowners and communities to recover quickly after a disaster.

The *Welfare-to-Work Awards* will be presented to a former welfare recipient who is now a self-supporting entrepreneur and to individuals who have contributed to the Welfare-to-Work initiative.

Additional special awards honor the *SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Small Business Exporter of the Year* and the *SBA Entrepreneurial Success Award* winner. The latter award is presented to a company that has developed into a large business with SBA assistance. The National *SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives) Chapter of the Year* will also be honored.

Another first this year are the *New Markets Lending Awards* to recognize and honor the outstanding efforts of SBA's 7(a) Participating Lenders, Certified Development Companies and Micro-Lenders. These awards foster competition and encourage lending to small businesses in areas designated as "New Markets."

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State award winners and recipients of the advocate and special awards are nominated by local trade associations, chambers of commerce and business organizations. Their employees have nominated several state award winners.

During Small Business Week, the winners meet with top administration officials, members of Congress and leaders of national business organizations.

For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA's Small Business Week Web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>.

*Additional information about SBA programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov>. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK-SBA**.*

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